R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 011 384 CG 000 056

A REPORT ON THE LOW ABILITY STUDENT AT MIRACOSTA COLLEGE.
STUDENT PERSONNEL STUDIES, SECTION G.
MIRACOST COLL., OCEANSIDE, CALIF.

PUB DATE 66

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.76 19P.

DESCRIPTORS- *REMEDIAL PROGRAMS, REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION, RESEARCH, *JUNIOR COLLEGES, *LOW ACHIEVERS, *FLEXIBLE PROGRESSION, *STUDENT PERSONNEL WORK, OCEANSIDE, AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST, NELSON DENNY READING TEST

ADMINISTRATORS HAVE ACCEPTED THE REMEDIAL PROGRAM AS A LEGITIMATE FUNCTION OF JUNIOR COLLEGES. IN THE FALL OF 1964, MIRACOSTA COLLEGE IMPLEMENTED A THREE-TRACK PROGRAM CONSISTING OF (1) A REMEDIAL PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE REMEDIAL COURSES AND TO LIMIT COURSE SELECTION, (2) AN "UNREALISTIC TRANSFER" PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TO TAKE REMEDIAL COURSES AND TO LIMIT COURSE SELECTION, AND (3) THE TRANSFER PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE FREE TO SELECT ANY COURSE. STUDENTS ARE ASSIGNED TO TRACKS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST ENGLISH SCORE, THE NELSON-DENNY READING TEST SCORE, AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADES. TO EVALUATE THE REMEDIAL PROGRAM, THE PERFORMANCE OF A CONTROL GROUP OF 35 REMEDIAL LEVEL STUDENTS WHO ENTERED MIRACOSTA COLLEGE BEFORE THE REMEDIAL PROGRAM WAS BEGUN, WAS COMPARED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF AN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP OF 38 REMEDIAL LEVEL STUDENTS WHO ENTERED THE REMEDIAL PROGRAM. THE COMPARISON WAS BASED UPON THE STUDENTS' COLLEGE ACADEMIC RECORDS, THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEMESTERS EACH GROUP PERSISTED IN COLLEGE, AND THE LENGTH OF COLLEGE TRAINING AS COMPARED TO THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADE POINT AVERAGE. THE CONCLUSIONS, TABULAR DATA FOR THIS RESEARCH PROJECT, AND AN EVALUATION OF THE THREE-TRACK PROGRAM ARE PRESENTED. (FS)

S T U D E N T P E R S O N N E L S T U D I E S

Prepared for

The Board of Trustees

and

The President of

MiraCosta College

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education
This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated do not necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

ED011384

Edited by

The Counseling and Guidance Staff
MiraCosta College

1965-1966

CG 000 056

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

A Report on the Low Ability Student at MiraCosta College

A study to determine the degree of success experienced by the academically limited students who were enrolled in a specially designed remedial program in the fall of 1964.

Section G

CG 000 056

A STUDY OF THE ACADEMICALLY LIMITED STUDENT AT MIRACOSTA COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

A major problem in the California Junior College is the "open door" admission policy and, according to Burton R. Clark as stated in his article "The Cooling-Out Function in Higher Education",[1] the problem centers around the inconsistency between the emphasis which our culture places on college education and the fact that many students are too limited in their abilities to profit from a college education. Because of this pressure, our society must find some means "to sustain motivation in the face of disappointment" and offer the limited ability student some satisfaction. One alternative is to place limited students into remedial classes. One of the remedial classes can provide an opportunity for the student to evaluate his own abilities, interests and aptitudes, to assay his vocational choices, and to make educational plans to implement his choice. If the student ignores the evidence he will eventually encounter a deterrent in regular classes by receiving low grades.

A desirable agent of the "cooling-out" process is that it offers the student an alternative achievement by allowing him to rectify his mistake, instead of failing, by modifying his ultimate goals.

---

[1] Burton R. Clark, "The Cooling-Out Function in Higher Education," American Journal of Sociology, May 1960.

This type of program enables the junior college to salvage some manpower and at the same time to explore possible careers for lower level students.

Many junior colleges are working on the problem of how to meet the needs of students with low abilities. A recent report of a national study of junior college courses and curriculums indicated that in a survey of 185 junior colleges, 42% provided special courses and curriculums and an additional 22% provided regular remedial courses for low ability students. On the basis of the findings of this investigation, the following conclusion seems warranted. The remedial function is accepted by the administrators of junior colleges as a legitimate function of these institutions.

The Curriculum Commission of the American Association of Junior Colleges has expressed genuine concern about the need for providing special courses and curriculums for low ability students.

In the fall of 1964, MiraCosta College implemented a three-track program designed to provide opportunity for each student to progress according to his ability with special emphasis placed on students who are academically deficient and/or intellectually limited. In previous years students have been permitted to enroll in courses within which they have little chance of success. Therefore, the rationale of the multiple track program was to identify low academic achievement and to provide remedial courses and training for students whose

background is insufficient to benefit from the college transfer courses. The criterion for the selection for and placement into the three-track program included the results of the American College Test (ACT) English score and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and an analysis of the high school grades. A description of the three-track program follows:

Remedial Program

In order to more realistically place students with serious reading problems, a comprehensive program of reading development appears to be necessary. Students for this program are selected on the basis of scores on the ACT English Test below 14, and their high school grade-point average. The reading level is from third to eighth grade equivalency. Students in this program are restricted to certain curricula and certain courses including a five-unit remedial reading laboratory course, which provides individualized instruction and vocabulary development, a five-unit remedial United States History course and a three-unit life adjustment psychology course, which is designed to assist the student in realistically recognizing his educational limitations and to assist him in evaluating his aptitudes and interests. The recommendation of the instructor must be attained in assigned classes before he can progress to the next level of instruction in that field. Nevertheless, a student who selects certain vocational-occupational programs such as drafting, secretarial, etc., is not absolutely restricted to the above courses.

Unrealistic Transfer Program

The second program is designed for students who received a standard score between 14-20 on the American College Test and have high school grades indicating low achievement in college preparatory courses. These students are also restricted in their selection of courses unless high school grades indicate otherwise. Although this second group has a greater variety of courses to choose from they are required to take an English review of fundamentals and it is strongly recommended that they enroll in a reading development course, and many of these students are required to take the remedial U. S. History and psychology courses. If a student is deficient in only one subject area he is free to select courses from areas in which he qualifies. The recommendation of the instructors must be attained in assigned classes before he can progress to the next level of instruction in that field.

Transfer Program

This third group has received a standard score above 20 on the ACT English Test as well as high academic achievement in college preparatory courses and is free to select any terminal or transfer program.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this study a remedial, or academically limited student, is defined as one who scores below the 20 percentile (national norms for four-year colleges) on the American College Test and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, College Level.

METHOD

The remedial students enrolled in the falls of 1962 and 1964 were identified. A control group and an experimental group were selected.

Control Group - In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the remedial reading program a control group, students who entered MiraCosta College in the fall of 1962 falling below the 20 percentile on the College placement tests, were selected. This group included 35 students who were not restricted in the selection of many of their courses, however, they did not have the opportunity to enroll in a daily reading laboratory as this program was not available at that time.

Experimental Group - The experimental group was composed of 38 students who entered MiraCosta College in the fall of 1964 and were selected primarily on their test scores on the American College Test and their high school grade-point average. To verify their placement this group was further tested on the Nelson-Denny College Reading Test. The reading range of these students was from 1.5 grade placement to 9.5 grade placement. This group was restricted to the specially designed program which included a daily developmental reading class, remedial history and remedial psychology.

The academic records of the 1962 remedial students were compared with the academic records of the 1964 remedial students to investigate and determine the degree of effectiveness of the specially designed curriculum for the low level students introduced into the curriculum in the fall of 1964.

The information used to analyze the control and experimental groups is depicted on Tables I through V.

Table I shows the number of semesters the control and experimental groups persisted in college.

Tables II and III compare the two groups as to the grade-point average achieved while in attendance at MiraCosta College.

Tables IV and V focus on the length of college training as compared to the high school grade-point average.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A comparison of the control and experimental groups.

1) Included in this study were thirty-five remedial students who enrolled in the fall of 1962 and thirty-eight remedial students who entered MiraCosta College in the fall of 1964.

2) Table I reports the classification of the academically limited students in 1962 and 1964.

As shown in Table I, in 1962, 31 percent (10) students withdrew before the end of the first semester. On the other hand, only 8 percent (3) 1964 students withdrew during the first semester.

3) A total of 51 percent (18) of the 1962 students had dropped during or upon completion of one semester. While in the 1964 group a total of 15 percent (6) had dropped during the same period. Noteworthy was that this represents a differential of 36 percent; therefore retention of students enrolled in a designated remedial program in 1964 was significantly higher.

4) Table I also reveals that by the end of the second semester 62 percent (22) 1962 students had dropped out of school; while only 41 percent (15) of the 1964 students had left school by the end of the first year. This is obviously a significant difference.

5) Twenty-eight percent (10) of the 1962 students completed three semesters or more. In the 1964 group,

45 percent (17) were able to successfully complete three semesters or more.

6) Table II (1962) and Table III (1964) depicts the grade-point averages of both groups while in attendance at MiraCosta College. As evidenced by Tables II and III, none of the students in either group earned a grade-point average of "A" or "B". But 25 percent of the 1962 and 53 percent of the 1964 students did maintain a "C" average. Thirty-seven percent as compared to 26 percent of the 1964 students received a "D" average.

7) Table IV (1962) and Table V (1964) compare the length of college attendance with the high school grade-point average. The anticipated pattern of college attendance based on high school performance did not emerge. Approximately forty percent of each group were below a "C" average in high school. The high school grade-point average did not appear, in this limited study, to be a factor in predicting the number of college semesters a student would complete.

COMMENTS

One 1962 student succeeded in a transfer program. Currently six 1964 students are enrolled in a transfer program and have maintained a "C" average to date.

Without question the specially designed remedial program in the overall picture has provided success for a number of students who would have otherwise failed or dropped school.

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF CLASSIFICATION OF ACADEMICALLY LIMITED STUDENTS FOR FALL 1962 AND 1964

	1962		1964	
Classification	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Number Entering	35	100%	38	100%
Number Continuing Second Semester	17	49%	32	84%
Number Continuing Third Semester	10	28%	17	45%
Number Continuing Fourth Semester	3	8%	14	37%

Observation - Thirty-seven percent of the 1964 students with low ability completed four semesters of college as compared to eight percent of the low-ability students who entered in the fall of 1962 when a remedial program was not available and they were permitted to enroll in transfer courses.

TABLE II

RETENTION AND GRADE-POINT AVERAGES OF FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN FALL 1962 WHO SCORED BELOW 145 ON THE COOPERATIVE ENGLISH TOTAL

Fall 1962

Number Semesters Completed	Total Cases	A	B	C	D	WF or F	W	Percent of Group Eliminated
0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	28.6
1	8	0	0	2	5	0	1	22.8
2	9	0	0	4	5	0	0	25.8
3	5	0	0	2	1	2	0	14.2
4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2.8
5 or more	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	5.8
TOTALS	35	0	0	9	13	2	11	100.0
Percentages of groups receiving A, B, C's		0	0	25.8	37.1	5.7	31.4	

TABLE III

RETENTION AND GRADE-POINT AVERAGES OF FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN DESIGNATED REMEDIAL COURSES

Fall 1964

Number Semesters Completed	Total Cases	Grade-Point Average				WF or F	W	Percent of Group Eliminated
		A	B	C	D			
0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	7.9
1	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	7.9
2	9	0	0	5	2	2	0	23.7
3	9	0	0	4	4	1	0	23.7
4	12	0	0	8	3	1	0	31.6
5 or more	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	5.2
TOTALS	38	0	0	20	10	5	3	100.0
Percentages of groups receiving A, B, C's		0	0	52.6	26.3	13.2	7.9	

TABLE IV

STUDENTS WHO SCORED BELOW 145 ON THE
COOPERATIVE ENGLISH TOTAL

Fall 1962

Length of College Training as Compared to the High School Grade-Point Average

HSGPA	No.	WITHDREW 1st SEM.	COLLEGE SEMESTERS COMPLETED 1	2	3	4	5+	TOTAL No.	%
2.0 and Above	14	4	2	5	2	1		14	40
Below 2.0	14	5	4	3	2			14	40
None Available	5	1	2			1	1	5	14
Non-Graduate	2			1	1			2	6
TOTALS	35	10	8	9	5	2	1	35	100
Percentages		28.6	22.8	25.8	14.2	5.8	2.8		

NOTE: In the small sampling involved, high school grade-point average does not appear to be a factor in predicting the number of semesters a student will complete. Some students enrolled in a vocational program; others stayed in non-transfer courses numbered 50 and above and consequently many of these students were able to avoid probation and disqualification.

TABLE V

STUDENTS WHO WERE ENROLLED IN ENGLISH 52A

Fall 1964

Length of College Training as Compared to the High School Grade-Point Average

HSGPA	No.	WITHDREW 1st SEM.	COLLEGE SEMESTERS COMPLETED 1	2	3	4	5+*	TOTAL No.	%
2.0 and Above	16	1	2	3	3	6	1	16	42
Below 2.0	17		1	5	5	5	1	17	45
None Available	4	2		1	1			4	10
Non-Graduate	1					1		1	3
TOTALS	38	3	3	9	9	12	2	38	100
Percentages		7.9	7.9	23.7	23.7	31.6	5.2		

* Several students who were enrolled in English 52A had been in attendance at MiraCosta College preceding the fall of 1964.

NOTE: It would appear that in this group student persistence and high school grades are not correlated. Students receiving D,F grades continued as frequently as the students who received A, B and C grades. A greater number of D,F students may remain in college because the specially designed remedial program is geared to the individual's performance level. The chances of temporary success are far greater than in a regular program.

EVALUATION

1) The program has definitely been a success. Students on the average have shown a gain of two-year grade placement in reading. Some students have improved as much as five years in one semester. Students are very enthusiastic about the reading program; many request permission to continue beyond the available one-year program.

2) A significant improvement in standards has been reported by instructors of regular transfer courses which were formerly hampered by the presence of remedial and unrealistic transfer students.

3) The instructors of the remedial program report that their students are more motivated than when they were exposed to transfer courses where they had little or no chance for success. Instructors feel that in general these students are working at maximum effort.

4) The cutoff score of 14 on the American College Test seems to be a reasonable one, along with the high school record.

5) It is felt that the general fund of knowledge and skills of these students has been increased. Deficiencies have been repaired and some students have been salvaged.

6) The program is highly dependent on sensitive and competent counseling and instruction. To select and

place on the basis of test scores without intensive counseling and dedicated teaching would be unfair to the students involved.

7) Whereas only a few will complete the Associate of Arts degree it is felt that the retention rate is much greater for this level student than was the case several years ago before this program was available. This program is meeting individual needs and the student has an opportunity to improve his basic skills.

8) The test of success cannot be demonstrated by statistics alone but rather only by the growth and recovery of each individual.

By setting up remedial and transfer courses and screening students into the proper courses, those students needing remedial work may be salvaged and those capable of transfer can attend classes maintaining high scholarship standards.